

To Members of the Education Committee of the General Assembly:

My name is Nancy Sarra. I am a proud home owner in New Britain, have raised my children in New Britain and am currently the Director of Teaching and Learning for the Consolidated School District of New Britain. I am writing tonight in opposition of the Governor's educational proposal.

1. The Governor has proposed flat funding of ECS while allocating additional monies for Charters and Magnet Schools. Over the past five years funding for Charters and Magnets have increased by 68% while funding for local public schools have increased by 8% during that same time period. These silos of academic offerings have grown in response to the Sheff settlement with the purpose being to reduce racial, ethnic and socioeconomic isolation. Has it worked? New Britain is viewed as a "suburb" in the context of the Sheff decision. I argue that the principles of Sheff should be viewed as a statewide goal applying to all school districts.

I am advocating for some of those additional dollars to be equitably distributed across educational systems with a focus on Priority School Districts.

2. The ECS formula, which is suppose to include multiple factors such as student poverty, has been frozen at an arbitrary level. In other words - it is not being applied.

To maintain a status quo educational system in New Britain for next year, we need a \$5.3 million increase. This accounts for contractual increases in both employee salary/benefits and other services as well as facility upkeep/utilities.

In 2013 -14 New Britain was ranked 157 th in per pupil expenditures at \$12,842 - while the State average was \$15,180 and our DRG I average was \$16,027. Within our DRG four cities receive a higher per pupil allocation - Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport and Windham.

While it is true that the State funds two thirds of our budget - New Britain students are among the neediest children in the State. Our New Britain Children need AND DESERVE more. We understand that equity is not everyone receiving the same ...it is receiving what you need....

Approximately 80% of our New Britain Children live in poverty. We must be properly equipped to close the achievement gap ( opportunity gap, accessibility gap, resource gap). We need to lower class size, increase support for Tier II and Tier III students, offer more children extended day/extended year and wrap around services.

3. New Britain is ahead of the state in many ways:

a. The State is discussing mandating All Day Kindergarten - New Britain has been doing this for years with our limited resources!

b. The State is talking about school resource officers and Mou's with local police departments - New Britain has accomplished this as well.

c. Secondary education reform and increased credit requirement - New Britain has done

d. The state is discussing aggressively addressing chronic absenteeism and closely monitoring attendance - The state is looking to New Britain for their ongoing, systemic successful work to this .end. We are being recognized nationally for our efforts in reducing chronic absenteeism.

e. The state is discussing tackling the issue of under credited over age high school students - New Britain planned and implemented a Satellite Academy as an intervention to help those students under credited.

f. When the Common Core was first published, New Britain's Staff developed curriculum and secured textbooks aligned to the state standards. In addition, New Britain has successfully worked with our local government to provide resources - a two year City bond authorization that allowed the Boe to purchase new text books and provide classroom technology throughout the district and a previous increase ( 2013-14) in local contribution by \$4 million.

BASED ON 10,500 STUDENTS - THAT DOLLAR AMOUNT EQUATES TO INCREASING OUR EXPENDITURES BY \$476.00 PER STUDENT PER YEAR OR \$2.46 PER STUDENT PER DAY.

What we lack in sufficient resources is partially mitigated by the sheer determination and dedication of our people! It is time our New Britain Children receive adequate funding for a quality education.

Nancy Sarra  
Proud New Britain Homeowner and  
Director of Teaching and Learning  
Consolidated School District of New Britain